

Father Andrew Greeley, the sociologist, has found that "relationships related to religion" are clearly the major forces mobilizing volunteers in America. We're talking here about mentors for children, volunteers in homeless programs, those who give comfort at shelters for battered women. Are all these good volunteers just seeking strength in numbers?

While you were making money wrestling, Mother Teresa was devoting her life to the poor of Calcutta. Maybe you think she would have been better off in the ring with Disco Inferno.

I don't want to get too personal, but I truly want to know what you're trying to tell us. The nuns who taught me in grade school and the Benedictine monks who taught me in high school devoted the whole of their lives to helping young people learn. Was their dedication to others a sign of weakness? The parish I grew up in was full of parents—my own included—whose religious faith motivated them to build a strong community that nurtured us kids. I guess you're telling me those parents I respected were only seeking strength in numbers.

Somewhere around 100 million Americans attend religious services in any given week. Sociologists agree we are one of the most religiously observant countries in the world, especially compared to other wealthy nations. Are we a weak-minded country?

In explaining your comments afterward, you said: "This is Playboy; they want you to be provocative." Does that mean you would have said something different to the editors of, say, Christianity Today?

And, Governor, one last question: Are you tough-minded enough to understand the meaning of the words: "Your act is wearing thin?"

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ART FROM THE HEART

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thought I would use this time, before we go forward in the Senate with some additional votes, to speak on two matters. I am actually waiting for a few visuals, or pictures, I want to show regarding what I am going to say.

First of all, let me thank a pretty amazing group of young people from my State of Minnesota for coming all the way here to Washington, DC. These are high school students, and they have brought, if you will, art that is from the heart. It is an art display that will be on exhibit in the rotunda of the Russell Senate Office Building.

This month of October is an awareness of domestic violence month. People in the country should understand, if they don't already, that about every 13 seconds, a woman is battered in her home—about every 13 seconds.

A home should be a safe place for women and children. What these students have done is—and I first saw their display at the Harriet Tubman Center back home in Minnesota—they have presented some art that, as I say, is really from the heart. This artwork, in the most powerful way, deals with the devastating impact of violence in homes, not only on women and adults but on children as well.

Quite often, we have debates out here on the floor of the Senate about the negative impact of television violence, or violence in movies, on children. The fact is that for too many children—maybe as many as 5 million children in our country—they don't need to turn on the TV or go to a movie to see the violence; they see the violence in their homes.

We will have this really marvelous display of art by these students from Minnesota, and it will be in the Russell rotunda on display this week. Tonight, for other Senators, at 6:30, there will be a reception for these students. They should be honored for their fine work.

Mr. President, I commend Mr. Dionne. His words speak eloquently to the emotions and feelings of many of us. Again, I respect the Governor of Minnesota in expressing his views, but we certainly have an obligation to express ours. E.J. Dionne has expressed them well with this Member of the Senate.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

DISSIDENTS DISAPPEARING IN BELARUS

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, the government of Belarus has systematically intimidated and punished members of opposition political groups for several years now. Ordinary citizens—some as young as fifteen—have been beaten, arrested, and charged with absurd criminal offenses all because they dared to speak out against the President of Belarus, Alex Lukashenko, and his crushing of basic human rights and civil liberties there.

Recently, however, events have grown worse. Four dissidents, closely watched by the government's omnipresent security police have vanished. The government says it has no clues as to why. Up until now, the President only beat and jailed his opponents. The President now appears to be behind a series of disappearances by key opposition figures since April, as reported in the New York Times. Last week, the State Department said that it was greatly concerned about the pattern of disappearances and urged the government of Belarus to find and protect those who had vanished. The disappearances coincide with the strongest campaign yet launched by Belarus's pro-democracy movement to press the government for reforms.

The first person to disappear was the former chairwoman of the Central Bank (Tamara Vinnikova). She publicly supported the former prime minister, an opposition candidate, and was being held on trumped up charges under house arrest with an armed guard at the time she vanished. That she was held under house arrest, guarded at all times by live-in KGB agents,

her telephone calls and visitors strictly screened, strongly suggests that her disappearance was orchestrated by the authorities.

In May, Yuri Zakharenka, a former interior minister and an opposition activist, disappeared as he was walking home. He was last seen bundled into a car by a group of unidentified men. His wife said for two weeks prior to his abduction, he had complained of being tailed by two cars.

At the height of protests in July, another opposition leader, speaker of the illegally disbanded parliament, fled to Lithuania, saying that he feared for his life.

Then two weeks ago, Victor Gonchar, a leading political dissident, and his friend, a publisher, vanished on an evening outing, even though Mr. Gonchar was under constant surveillance by the security police. Gonchar's wife reportedly contacted city law enforcement agencies, local hospitals and morgues without result. The government maintains that it has no information on his whereabouts. Mr. Gonchar has been instrumental in selecting an opposition delegation to OSCE-mediated talks with the government, and was scheduled to meet with the U.S. ambassador to Belarus on September 20. Earlier this year, police violently assaulted and arrested him on charges of holding an illegal meeting in a private cafe, for which he served ten days in jail.

Before President Lukashenko came to office in 1994, one could see improvements in the human rights situation in Belarus. Independent newspapers emerged, and ordinary citizens started openly expressing their views and ideas, opened associations and began to organize. The parliament became a forum for debate among parties with differing political agendas. The judiciary also began to operate more independently.

After Mr. Lukashenko was elected president, he extended his term and replaced the elected Parliament with his own hand-picked legislators in a referendum in 1996, universally condemned as rigged. Since then, he has held fast to his goal of strengthening his dictatorship. He has ruthlessly sought to control and subordinate most aspects of public life, both in government and in society, cracking down on the media, political parties and grass roots movements. Under the new constitution, he overwhelmingly dominates other branches of government, including the parliament and judiciary.

The first president of democratic Belarus, Stanislav Shushkevich, and now in the opposition, said recently that the government is resorting to state terrorism by abducting and silencing dissidents. He said, "the regime has gone along the path of eliminating the leaders against whom it can't open even an artificial case. This is done with the goal of strengthening the dictatorship."

I am deeply concerned that comments by senior government officials

this past week which betray official indifference to those disappearances.

I urge President Lukashenko to use all available means at his disposal to locate the four missing—and to ensure the safety and security of all living in Belarus, regardless of their political views. What is happening in Belarus now is an outrage. The world is watching what President Lukashenko does to address it.

Mr. President, I want the Government of Belarus to know that their blatant violation of the human rights of citizens is unacceptable. The report several days ago of four prominent men and women who have had the courage to stand up against this very repressive Government of Belarus raises very serious questions. As a Senator, I want to speak from the floor and condemn that Government's repressive actions. I want to make it clear to the Government of Belarus that these actions, the repression and violation of citizens' rights in Belarus, is unacceptable, I think, to every single Senator.

I think many of us in the human rights community are very worried about whether or not they are still alive. I would not want the Government of Belarus to think they can engage in this kind of repressive activity with impunity. That is why I speak about this on the floor of the Senate.

ECONOMIC CONVULSION IN AGRICULTURE

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, let me, one more time, return to a question I have put to the majority leader, and then I say to my colleague from Arizona I will complete my remarks.

In the last 3 weeks now, I have asked for the opportunity to introduce legislation—amendments—which would speak directly to what can only be described as an economic convulsion in agriculture, the unbelievable economic pain in the countryside, and the number of farmers who are literally being obliterated and driven off the land.

Up to date, I have not been able to get any kind of clear commitment from the majority leader as to when we will have the opportunity for all of us in the Senate to have a substantive debate about this and take action. For those of us in agricultural States, this is very important. I want to signal to colleagues that I will look for an opportunity, and the first opportunity I get, I will try to do everything I can to focus our attention on what can only be described as a depression in agriculture. I will try to focus the attention of people in the Senate, Democrats and Republicans alike, on the transition that is now taking place in agriculture, which I think, if it runs its full course, we will deeply regret as a Nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

AIR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT ACT—Continued

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, for the benefit of my colleagues, we are nearing the end as far as amendments are concerned. We will be ready within about 20 minutes to a half hour to complete an amendment by Senator DORGAN. We are in the process of working on it. We have several amendments by Senator HATCH that we are trying to get so we can work those out. We have no report yet from Senator HUTCHISON on whether or not she wants an amendment. So if Senator HUTCHISON, or her staff, is watching, we would like to get that resolved. There is a modification of an amendment by Senator BAUCUS.

Other than that, we will be prepared to move to the previous unanimous consent agreement concerning debate on the Robb amendment and vote on that, followed by final passage. I believe we are nearing that point. So as we work out the final agreements on these amendments, I hope that within 10 or 15 minutes we will be able to complete action on that and be prepared to move to the Robb amendment debate and then final passage.

Mr. President, in the meantime, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1898, AS MODIFIED

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator BAUCUS, I send a modification to the desk and ask that it be accepted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The modification will be accepted.

The amendment (No. 1898), as modified, is as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

() AIRLINE QUALITY SERVICE REPORTS.—The Secretary of Transportation shall modify the Airline Service Quality Performance reports required under part 234 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, to more fully disclose to the public the nature and source of delays and cancellations experienced by air travelers. Such modifications shall include a requirement that air carriers report delays and cancellations in categories which reflect the reasons for such delays and cancellations. Such categories and reporting shall be determined by the Administrator in consultation with representatives of airline passengers, air carriers, and airport operators, and shall include delays and cancellations caused by air traffic control.

AMENDMENT NO. 1927

(Purpose: To amend title 18, United States Code, with respect to the prevention of frauds involving aircraft or space vehicle parts in interstate or foreign commerce.)

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator HATCH and others, I send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. MCCAIN], for Mr. HATCH, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. THURMOND, proposes an amendment numbered 1927.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I am proud to offer the Aircraft Safety Act of 1999 as an amendment to S. 82, the Air Transportation Improvement Act. I join with Senator LEAHY and Senator THURMOND in proposing this amendment, which will provide law enforcement with a potent weapon in the fight to protect the safety of the traveling public. This is one piece of legislation which could truly help save hundreds of lives.

Current federal law does not specifically address the growing problem of the use of unapproved, uncertified, fraudulent, defective or otherwise unsafe aviation parts in civil, military and public aircraft. Those who traffic in this potentially lethal trade have thus far been prosecuted under a patchwork of Federal criminal statutes which are not adequate to deter the conduct involved. Most subjects prosecuted to date have received little of no jail time, and relatively minor fines have been assessed. Moreover, law enforcement has not had the tools to prevent these individuals from reentering the trade or to seize and destroy stockpiles of unsafe parts.

While the U.S. airline industry can take pride in the safety record they have achieved thus far, trade in fraudulent and defective aviation parts is a growing problem which could jeopardize that record. These suspect parts are not only readily available throughout the country, they are being installed on aircraft as we speak. This problem will continue to grow as our fleet of commercial and military aircraft continues to age. Safe replacement parts are vital to the safety of this fleet. When you consider that one Boeing 747 has about 6 million parts, you begin to understand the potential for harm caused by the distribution of fraudulent and defective parts.

Where do these parts come from? Some are used or scrap parts which should be destroyed, or have not been properly repaired. Others are simply counterfeit parts using substandard materials unable to withstand the rigors imposed through daily use on a modern aircraft. Some are actually scavenged from among the wreckage and broken bodies strewn about after an airplane crash. For example, when American Airlines Flight 965 crashed into a mountain in Columbia in 1995, it wasn't long before some of the parts from that aircraft wound up back in